

September 16, 2016

Kittleman, Hogan, Weinstein announce FEMA funds approved for Ellicott City flash flood costs

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman, along with Governor Larry Hogan and County Council Vice Chairman Jon Weinstein, today announced that Howard County has been awarded public assistance funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a result of President Barack Obama's declaration of emergency for costs incurred during the July 30 Ellicott City flash flood.

By granting the declaration, federal assistance will be made available for expenses related to infrastructure repair and replacement, hazard mitigation projects, debris removal, and other costs associated with the storm. Kittleman said a FEMA declaration means that Howard County will be able to recover 75 percent of FEMA eligible costs.

"This is welcome news for the people of Ellicott City," said Kittleman. "This Declaration will help us coordinate and take advantage of the many Federal resources available to us. These resources will help us implement long-term flood mitigation projects to rebuild Ellicott City to become a model resilient community. I am thankful to Governor Hogan and our Federal delegation for their continued support throughout this process."

Kittleman, along with Senators Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin and representatives from Hogan's and Congressman Elijah Cummings's offices, met with FEMA on Wednesday where Kittleman stressed the urgency of receiving the disaster declaration.

Kittleman also noted that Howard County already had a head start on recovery efforts, with former State Senator and County Executive Jim Robey serving as a special advisor, a Community Advisory Group in place, and a list of possible mitigation projects put together by the Historic Ellicott City Flood Work Group that Kittleman established in 2015.

"The opening up of federal mitigation grant funding will help us implement controls and projects to help prevent future flooding incidents from occurring," said Kittleman. "The declaration could open up funding from resources such as the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, potential IRS tax relief programs and the Cora Brown Fund."

Kittleman noted that a critical benefit of the declaration will be the support of a Federal Coordinating Officer whose job will be to take the lead in coordinating all the federal aid entities. This coordination will help the County ensure that it satisfies key requirements for all eligible programs and not miss out on any funding opportunities.

Hogan requested the federal assistance to help pay costs associated with the Ellicott City flooding in a letter to President Obama Aug. 12.

"When this devastating storm hit, we assured residents and leaders in Howard County that our administration would pursue all avenues of support to help our communities rebuild," said Governor Hogan. "I would like to thank Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman for his leadership and extend my sincerest gratitude to Senator Barbara Mikulski, Congressman Elijah Cummings, and the entire Maryland delegation for working diligently at the federal level to secure this vital assistance for businesses, citizens, and public infrastructure damaged by this historic flooding. I have been amazed by the resilience of Ellicott City and the surrounding communities and look forward to Main Street again being the focal point of local activity."

Weinstein, whose district contained the bulk of storm damage, said the FEMA announcement was welcome news.

"The Presidential disaster declaration is a direct result of the close collaboration between the county, state, and our federal delegation. The funds that come with this action will provide significant relief to the county government's recent and planned recovery efforts. I look forward to continuing to work closely with Executive Kittleman on identifying and implementing projects that will make Historic Ellicott City a better and safer place than before the flood."

The decision for a disaster declaration comes after the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), and Howard County emergency operations staff conducted damage assessments last month. The flooding, which occurred on a Saturday night, damaged or destroyed dozens of buildings and more than 200 vehicles, and caused the deaths of two individuals. Main Street and the adjacent sidewalks, plus underground infrastructure, also sustained significant damage. Governor Hogan has designated MEMA as the state coordinating agency for the declaration.

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